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23 March 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJ: Middle East Developments [REDACTED]

1. The Middle East Ad Hoc Working Group met in the National Indications Center conference room at 1000, Thursday, 19 March 1970. Based on a review of developments in the Middle East during the past week, the Working Group considered the following comments appropriate.

a. Soviet Military Assistance. The introduction of SA-3s into the UAR

In examining the evidence bearing on this question, we noted that such evidence decidedly points to an emphasis on air defense in Soviet efforts to bolster the UAR militarily. The SA-3 provides point defense, and, based on parallels in the USSR and Eastern Europe, we would expect the SA-3 sites to be fully integrated into the total air defense system in the UAR. It is estimated that about 22 sites would be required to defend critical areas. As of 15 March, enough equipment for at least 10 sites was estimated to be in-country. We would expect priority deployments to take place at Alexandria and Cairo West military airfield where there are concentrations of Soviet naval and naval air forces, respectively; this has already been observed. Second priority would most likely be for the defense of other UAR military airfields. Third priority deployments would probably take place in the vicinity of strategic industrial complexes and population centers.

To achieve maximum effectiveness of the SA-3 system, the Soviets will have to improve the total air defense system. This will require Soviet manning and operation of air defense communications and electronic equipment.

[REDACTED] If the Israelis attempt to take out the SA-3 sites (which we believe likely), resulting in an increase in Soviet casualties to an unacceptable level, or if the SA-3s are ineffective in deterring Israeli deep penetration air raids, the Soviets may consider it necessary to provide defensive air cover with Soviets flying UAR fighter aircraft.

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Available evidence suggests that SA-3 equipment began arriving in the UAR about 25 February and possibly as early as 20 February. The Soviet military airlift resumed 25 February after a hiatus since 28 January. On 20 February, KRASNYY OKTYABR arrived in Alexandria from Nikolaev, a known military cargo transshipment port on the Black Sea. The first reported sighting of SA-3 equipment occurred on 4 March, when flatcars were observed on the Alexandria military quay loaded with approximately two dozen SA-3 missile canisters in tandem.

On balance, we believe that the "system" referred to in the Brezhnev-Grechko conversation of 29 January is the SA-3. However, the evidence is not definitive enough to state categorically that this is so. If SA-3 equipment began arriving in the UAR as early as 20 or 25 February, or even 4 March, we cannot satisfactorily explain the time delay between these dates and the sightings of Soviet personnel and SA-3 equipment in the Alexandria and Cairo areas on 11, 13, and 15 March. We estimate that mobile sites can be established within 24-48 hours after the equipment and personnel have arrived. Are the sites at Alexandria and Cairo West the first, or were other sites established earlier at other locations? In this connection, we took note of rumors of Soviet missile sites in the Western Desert and a report of the construction of some forty SAM sites in the Inchas area as early as 6 March. Further, the continuation of Soviet military transport flights to Cairo (some 42 through 22 March) and the substantial increase in seaborne deliveries of military cargoes to the UAR indicate a level of assistance considerably above that required for the at least 10 SA-3 sites estimated on 15 March. We will be closely examining the pattern and extent of SA-3 deployments as well as other evidence for any suggestion that the SA-3 is not the "system."

b. Administrative Matters. The Working Group agreed to meet next at 1330, Monday, 30 March 1970, in the National Indications Center conference room.

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